

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3 have been amended to clarify that the stepwise part is an extension of the floor plate which is located at a lower level relative to the remainder of the floor plate. Claim 1 now further recites that the floor mat covers the floor plate including the stepwise part. Claim 3 had previously recited the second floor mat having a protrusion corresponding to the stepwise part.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Publication JP2000-177653. Applicants wish to thank Examiner Laux for the courtesy of an interview on June 5, 2007 at which time the outstanding rejection and possible amendments according to the present response were discussed. In particular, Applicants pointed out that the “step-wise portion” 32A, B in JP ‘653 extended upward and was not an extension of the floor plate located at a lower level relative to the remainder of the floor plate as is now recited in the claims. It is Applicants’ understanding, as a result of this discussion, that the rejection based upon JP ‘653 would be withdrawn upon the submission of the present amendment.